

**Footnotes**

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The Newsletter of FPRI's [Wachman Center](#) **A Guide to Teaching About the War on Terrorism**

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Discussion of terrorism and the war against it has remained front and center in American's lives and America's classrooms since 9/11/01. The following areas are designed to help in examining this subject from the perspective of the 18 months since the September 11 attack.

1. Iraq

A. Fighting the War

It is now clear that a war with Iraq will be the second major phase of the war on terrorism. While the war in Afghanistan continues at a smaller scale than in its initial days, Iraq is the present focus for the next large-scale action. Many lessons can be taught centering around the way this war will be fought. Issues include the type of weapon systems to be used, the organization of the U.S. armed forces, the role of allied countries (as both bases and participants), the kinds of resistance likely to be offered by Iraq, comparisons with the 1991 Gulf War, strategic errors that might be committed in the fighting, geography lessons, and geopolitical lessons.

B. Results of the War and the "Endgame"

Perhaps the most important area for scholastic inquiry at present is the war's outcome. Many possible scenarios have been advanced. The following is a list of options—some likely, some possible, some most unlikely—many of which were suggested by FPRI Senior Fellow Michael Radu in a talk to my AP US History students on February 27:

1. An Iraqi government led by defecting military. (likely)
2. An ineffective "government by committee" arrangement. (likely)
3. Establishment of a U.S. "Pro-consul" in Iraq (post-World War II Japan-style model). (possible)
4. An Iraqi exile-led government. (possible)
5. Foreign troops in coalition maintaining order. (possible)
6. An Iraqi opposition group led government emerging from within Iraq. (unlikely)
7. The break up of Iraq into two or three countries—one Kurdish dominated, one Shia dominated, one Sunni dominated. (unlikely)
8. Annexation of sections of Iraq by Turkey and Iran. (unlikely)
9. Civil War and the absence of any foreign presence. (unlikely)

Outcomes of another sort include the following:

1. Ecological impact of the war. (horrible and likely, based on the Gulf War experience)
2. Casualties, military and civilian. (Estimates on the number of Iraqis killed in the Gulf War range between 15,000 and 30,000. The casualties in this war could be higher, lower, or comparable. Fewer than 300 Americans were

killed in the Gulf War. This could certainly be higher.)

C. Iraq and Terrorism

Iraqi links with terrorism can be explored as part of the United States' overall war on terrorists "with a global reach." Many of the lessons from the earlier *Footnotes* on ["Teaching About the War on Terrorism"](http://www.fpri.org/footnotes/081.200303.dickler.teachingwaronterrorism.html) (2/2002) can be used in this regard. In addition, terrorist organizations can be studied and then connected or disconnected in terms of Iraq. For example, the late Abu Nidal, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad all have definite links with Iraq. Al Qaeda, on the other hand, does not appear at this time to have any significant links with Iraq-other than common purpose in opposing the U.S. and Western culture. Iraq can be studied as a terrorist state itself. Numerous human rights organizations and government intelligence agencies have documented the abuses there.

D. Sovereignty

When is it acceptable for a country(ies) to interfere in the affairs of another country? Did Iraq qualify under the conditions reached in your discussion? What is the role of non-sovereign entities such as Al Qaeda in this discussion?

II. Al Qaeda

It is clear that Al Qaeda is still vibrant and dangerous, if somewhat diminished in leadership, membership, and communication. Consider the following issues/questions:

1. How did the war in Afghanistan affect Al Qaeda?
2. How do the ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan affect Al Qaeda?
3. Consider Al Qaeda-related developments in the Philippines and the reentry of U.S. troops to fight there.
4. What is Al Qaeda's role in facing Hindu populations in Kashmir, other parts of India, and Indonesia?
5. How great is Al Qaeda's involvement in the Algerian opposition? That civil war has claimed over 120,000 lives in less than ten years.
6. Does Al Qaeda's pose a threat in the main because of its infiltration of the West in countries such as Britain, Germany, Spain, the U.S., and Canada?
7. How should captured Al Qaeda members be treated? Options include temporary detention, indefinite detention, trial before a military tribunal, or trial in regular criminal courts. Are these members POWs or criminals?

III. North Korea

A. Why Not North Korea?

Many students do not understand why war with North Korea, if there is to be any further war at all, is not given precedence over war with Iraq. Discussions of this sort require thorough historical, geographic, geopolitical, and diplomatic evidence for students to consider. In short, teachers need to consider several points.

North Korea has advanced weaponry and programs to produce WMD, including nuclear weapons. It quite possibly already has a few nuclear bombs. Nevertheless, there are many reasons why war with North Korea is not being considered by the Bush administration. U.S. political and economic allies South Korea and Japan are in close proximity to North Korea's weapons, and there may be no way to protect Seoul and even Tokyo from attack. Seoul is less than 20 miles from North Korea and could be badly damaged by North Korea's existing conventional weapons. Seoul is the economic hub of all of South Korea and home to more than 10 million people.

In addition, 37,000 U.S. troops are based just south of the DMZ, north of Seoul. Any war between North Korea and the United States on the scale being considered for Iraq would result in thousands and thousands of deaths, American and Korean.

North Korea's missiles could also attack Tokyo quite easily. The Tokyo metropolitan area is the hub of the world's second-largest economy and home to 27 million people, the world's most populated metropolitan area. Furthermore, the People's Republic of China and Russia would also feel threatened by a war on their borders. Kim Jong Il's North

Korea has as its main goal survival. It is a country mired in poverty and hopelessness. North Korea's leaders want to remain in power more than anything else. Barring an unlikely attack by it on Japan, South Korea or the U.S., war with North Korea is therefore unlikely. Diplomacy is the most reasonable option available, despite the unpleasant nature of the North Korean regime, and in spite of diplomacy's dismal history with North Korea.

IV. Homeland Security

A. Dangers to our Liberties at Home.

Teachers need to address the threats to American values and liberties due to the challenges posed by terrorism. As President Bush continually reiterates, not all Muslims are the enemy! The world of Islam is deeply divided. Muslims in Al Qaeda terrorist cells in America, or even those sympathetic to terrorists in America, are small in number. Civil liberties are still cherished rights in the United States, but wars lead to some containment of such rights in the areas of privacy, censorship, and detention, for example.

B. Dangers to Our Nation's Security

While there are an unlimited number of potential targets in the U.S., special consideration may be appropriate to skyscrapers, tunnels, suspension bridges, airports, trains, nuclear plants, hydroelectric plants, communication networks, and historic sites. Teachers may want to discuss the utility of security color-code designations. Immigration policy and student visa policies (especially in scientific and technical training) need additional consideration and discussion. Chemical and biological weapons issues are also appropriate for discussion. Should all Americans be inoculated for smallpox? What types of delivery systems are most likely to be used by terrorists, and what precautions are reasonable and unreasonable?

Teaching about war and its ramifications is always a challenge. The special challenge for teachers and students is to appreciate the changing dimensions of the issues associated with this war on terror.

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